



On the Road to West Yellowstone – G.O.V. Conference 2002

"The Montana G.O.V.* Conference: *Goals, Objectives and Visions for Montana's Tourism Future," will be the theme for this year's 28th annual tourism industry gathering. The two-day event will take place in West Yellowstone, April 18-19, 2002. The West Yellowstone Conference Hotel is the host facility, but other lodging and visitor services in West will welcome their peers from around Montana. Yellowstone National Park will officially open for the warm season on Saturday, April 20, so conference participants have the opportunity for a long weekend in southern Montana.

Conference Highlights

With the world's political and economic situation raising plenty of questions about tourism's future, the conference will feature a number of speakers who will bring the latest and best information on national and world travel trends.

Peter Yesawich will open the event with his presentation "America in Transition: A Preview of Emerging Lifestyles and Travel Trends." Yesawich is president and CEO of

Yesawich, Pepperdine & Brown (YP&B), a communications firm serving the travel and leisure industry. YP&B co-authors the widely acclaimed national travel *MONITOR* research series on the travel habits, preferences and intentions of Americans. Yesawich opened the 1999 Governor's Conference in Helena.

Bruce Beckham, a national expert in group travel and international markets, will share information about how Montana can capitalize on group travel trends.

The Hingston Roach Group will conduct a number of public input sessions for the 2003-2007 Strategic Plan for Montana's tourism and recreation industry and provide an update on the plan's development.

Other session topics include the latest statewide visitor survey information from the Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research (ITRR), successful marketing campaigns, 10 ways to improve Web sites, Montana's new national attractions, cultural tourism corridor development, international market update, and more.

On Thursday night, April 18, the West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce members have organized the Taste & Tales of West, a night on the town featuring a unique treasure hunt with 3

grand prizes, real West trivia, fun, food and tasty treats. Friday night will close the conference with a banquet featuring Governor Judy Martz and the presentation of the Tourism Person and the Tourism Community of the Year Awards.

The conference registration brochure will be mailed in late February. The \$120 "early bird" registration price is available through April 1. To register, contact RMS Management Services of Helena, 406-443-1160, fax 406-443-4614, e-mail: skopec@rmsmanagement.com. Conference registration forms, agenda, sponsor and exhibitor information, lodging options and other useful information are available on Travel Montana's Intranet site: travelmontana.state.mt.us/conference.

And the Winner Is

It's time to nominate an outstanding Montanan and Montana community for the 2002 Tourism Person and Community of the Year Awards. Nomination forms are available from Travel Montana by calling 406-444-2654 or via the Intranet site at travelmontana.state.mt.us/conference/awards.htm. The deadline for nominations is March 15, 2002.



Did You Know?

- Missoula was recognized by CNNmoney.com and *Outside* magazine as one of the best places to live in the United States.
- Montana was featured in recent editions of the *Miami Herald* and *The Dallas Morning News* newspapers.
- The new commemorative Lewis and Clark license plate is available for purchase at all county licensing bureaus in Montana. Sales of the plates help fund the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission.
- A new Lewis and Clark poster, created by Montana artist Monte Dolack, can be purchased at the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center in Great Falls. Proceeds benefit Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center education programs.
- Over 50,000 bowlers will call Billings "home" between February 9 and June 22, 2002, for the 99th annual American Bowling Congress tournament. Cheered on by 35,000 accompanying guests, the convention visitors are expected to pump over \$50 million into the Billings economy.
- Travel Montana's Intranet site www.travelmontana.state.mt.us has the latest news about the 2003-2007 Strategic Plan for Montana's tourism & recreation industry, the 2002 Governor's Conference, the new Special Events Grant Program, travel show leads, research data and more.

An Event of a Lifetime

Montana communities, organizations and tribal governments sponsoring or planning special event projects are invited to apply for \$100,000 in state tourism "bed tax" grant funds available from the Montana Department of Commerce Special Events Grant Program (SEGP). The SEGP application deadline is January 31, 2002. Events or festivals established prior to June 30, 1999 are not eligible for funding under the program.

"The goal of the Special Events Grant Program is to help level the playing field of economic opportunity by giving smaller Montana communities access to needed funds to successfully plan and carry out an event or festival," said Mark Simonich, Director, Montana Department of Commerce. "Increased revenue to these communities is important to sustained viability."

The program will offer two application deadlines during the 2002 fiscal year. Grants will be awarded based on a 3-tier approach that ranks counties on the basis of lowest per capita income, slowest population growth and highest unemployment. In addition, funding levels will be affected by what year the event was established.

SEGP grants are designed to be matching funds for non-profit organizations involved in developing new events or enhancing existing events or festivals. The types of projects eligible for grant awards include:

- **Attendance Events**—creating and developing lifestyle events that generate attendance and round out the Montana activity experience.
- **Enrichment Activities**—enhancing experiences of visitors and residents through cultural activities and events.

• **Promotional Events**—generating cost effective product and destination brand awareness through media exposure.

Event eligibility will be further critiqued using the following guidelines:

- Events established prior to June 30, 1999, are not eligible for funding.
- Events established July 1, 1999-June 30, 2000, are eligible for funding at the year three level.
- Events established July 1, 2000-June 30, 2001, are eligible for funding at the year two level.
- Events established after July 1, 2001, are eligible for funding at the year one level.

When the 2002 SEGP applications are received, a Department of Commerce/Governor's Tourism Advisory Council selection committee will review and rank the proposals. A SEGP funding recommendation list will be submitted to the Montana Department of Commerce Director for final approval.

For more information about the SEGP, or to request an application, contact Travel Montana at 406-444-2654. SEGP application materials can be downloaded from Travel Montana's Intranet site: travelmontana.state.mt.us, click on the "News & Updates" and go into the Travel Montana Applications and Forms section.

Take Our Lead

Claire Blacknell, RMI-United Kingdom, and Susan Maxwell, RMI-USA, represented Montana at the World Travel Market in London, November 12-15. Leads from the show are available on travelmontana.state.mt.us/OURPRO

GRAMS/OverseasMarketing.htm. The password to access the leads is "overseas." For more information contact Travel Montana's Pam Gosink at pam@visitmt.com or call 406-444-2654.

A Perfect Shot

The Slaughter Rule, a feature film written and directed by Missoula natives Alex and Andrew

Smith and shot in the Great Falls area last fall, will make its theatrical debut at the prestigious Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, in January 2002.



Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided to disabled persons on request.

Calendar of Events

January

- 1 Happy New Year from Travel Montana
- 8-11 A Taste of Winter Adventure Media Tour—West Yellowstone Country
- 9-14 Olympic Dreams Media Tour—Yellowstone Country

February

- 2-7 American Bus Association Convention (ABA) Orlando
- 4-5 Tourism Advisory Council Meeting—Great Falls
- 19-23 BIT trade show—Milan, Italy

For all of the latest Montana tourism industry information log on to Travel Montana's Intranet site: travelmontana.state.mt.us.



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